

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. An identifier indicating the status of each claim is provided.

1. (Currently Amended) A conveyor idler including a drum having an outer surface and an inner surface, a shaft about which the drum can rotate in a forward direction, a locking mechanism for preventing the drum from rotating in a reverse direction but which locking mechanism permits rotation of the drum in the forward direction, the locking mechanism having a plurality of wedging surfaces fixed directly or indirectly to the drum, and a plurality of locking members interposed between the wedging surfaces and the shaft, the plurality of locking members being rotatable about the shaft when the drum rotates in the forward direction, but when an attempt is made to rotate the drum in the reverse direction the plurality of locking members becomes releasably wedged between the wedging surfaces and the shaft, or a surface fixed to the shaft, thereby preventing the drum from rotating in the reverse direction wherein the plurality of locking members are located in a locking housing, the locking housing consisting of two axially spaced end members, the locking housing being located between the drum and the shaft, the locking housing having circumferentially spaced cages formed between the end members and between pairs of spaced axially extending walls located between the end members wherein the cages extend radially outwardly beyond the circumference of the end members for the locking members to ensure the circumferential spacing between the locking members does not vary.

Claims 2 – 4 (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) The conveyor idler of claim 41 wherein each locking member is rotatably located within its cage.
6. (Currently Amended) The conveyor idler of claim 41 wherein each locking member is radially movable within its cage.
7. (Canceled)
8. (Canceled)
9. (Currently Amended) The conveyor idler of claim 71 including a reinforcing web extending between the end members.
10. (Original) The conveyor idler of claim 1 wherein the wedging surface includes a ramp.
11. (Previously Presented) The conveyor idler of claim 1 wherein the wedging surface forms part of, or is fixed to, an end cap or closure of the drum, the end cap or closure being fixed to the drum.
12. (Original) The conveyor idler of claim 11 wherein the wedging surface is located within a locking housing receptacle which is fixed to the end cap.

13. (Original) The conveyor idler of claim 12 wherein the locking housing receptacle includes a plurality of circumferentially spaced slots which engage a plurality of radially extending webs in the end cap thereby to fix the locking housing receptacle to the end cap.
14. (Previously Presented) The conveyor idler of claim 1 wherein the wedging surface is located within a locking housing receptacle which is fixed to the inner surface of the drum.
15. (Original) The conveyor idler of claim 1 wherein the locking member is a ball bearing or roller bearing.
16. (Previously Presented) The locking mechanism of claim 1 wherein the locking members will simultaneously become releasably wedged between the shaft and the wedging surfaces thereby preventing the drum from being rotated in the reverse direction.

Claims 17 - 28 (Canceled)

29. (New) A conveyor idler including a drum having an outer surface and an inner surface, a shaft about which the drum can rotate in a forward direction, a locking mechanism for preventing the drum from rotating in a reverse direction but which locking mechanism permits rotation of the drum in the forward direction, the locking mechanism having a plurality of wedging surfaces fixed directly or indirectly to the drum, wherein the wedging surface forms part of, or is fixed to, an end cap or closure of the drum, the end cap or closure being fixed to the drum, and a plurality of locking members interposed between the wedging surfaces and the shaft, the plurality of

locking members being rotatable about the shaft when the drum rotates in the forward direction, but when an attempt is made to rotate the drum in the reverse direction the plurality of locking members becomes releasably wedged between the wedging surfaces and the shaft, or a surface fixed to the shaft, thereby preventing the drum from rotating in the reverse direction wherein the plurality of locking members are located in a locking housing, the locking housing being located between the drum and the shaft, the locking housing having circumferentially spaced cages for the locking members to ensure the circumferential spacing between the locking members does not vary.

30. (New) The conveyor idler of claim 29 wherein each locking member is rotatably located within its cage.

31. (New) The conveyor idler of claim 29 wherein each locking member is radially movable within its cage.

32. (New) The conveyor idler of claim 29 wherein the locking housing consists of two axially spaced end members, with the cages being formed between the end members and between pairs of spaced axially extending walls located between the end members.

33. (New) The conveyor idler of claim 32 wherein the cages extend radially outwardly beyond the circumference of the end members.

34. (New) The conveyor idler of claim 32 including a reinforcing web extending between

the end members.

35. (New) The conveyor idler of claim 29 wherein the wedging surface includes a ramp.

36. (New) The conveyor idler of claim 29 wherein the wedging surface is located within a locking housing receptacle which is fixed to the end cap.

37. (New) The conveyor idler of claim 36 wherein the locking housing receptacle includes a plurality of circumferentially spaced slots which engage a plurality of radially extending webs in the end cap thereby to fix the locking housing receptacle to the end cap.

38. (New) The conveyor idler of claim 29 wherein the wedging surface is located within a locking housing receptacle which is fixed to the inner surface of the drum.

39. (New) The conveyor idler of claim 29 wherein the locking member is a ball bearing or roller bearing.

40. (New) The locking mechanism of claim 29 wherein the locking members will simultaneously become releasably wedged between the shaft and the wedging surfaces thereby preventing the drum from being rotated in the reverse direction.